THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE Globe Investor

HD **Missed deadline means late carbon rebate for some**

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WC 662 words
PD 19 April 2023
SN The Globe and Mail
SC GLOB
ED Ontario
PG B9
LA English
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Many Canadians were unaware they wouldn't be receiving the payment unless they filed taxes early

Last week, the official Twitter account of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sent out a message highlighting the Liberal government's carbon levy rebate: “With the Climate Action Incentive rebate, which goes out today, we're putting more money in the pockets of millions of Canadians – and fighting climate change."

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But the majority of Canadians eligible for the tax rebate, which is meant to offset the cost of federal pollution pricing, likely didn't get their payment last Friday, when Mr. Trudeau's tweet went out.

That's because of a little-publicized deadline that has caught many tax filers off-guard this year.

To receive the first instalment of the 2023 climate rebate, which is distributed quarterly, by the middle of last Friday, eligible Canadians had to have their 2022 tax return assessed by the Canada Revenue Agency by March 24, according to information posted on the government web page about the tax-free payment.

Those whose taxes are assessed after March 24 will receive the first installment of the rebate in their next quarterly payment in July, Gabriel Bourget, director of communication at the Office of the Minister of National Revenue, said by e-mail.

This is the first year that the federal government will distribute the climate rebate, a tax-free amount available to individuals and families in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, in four quarterly instalments starting in the middle of April.

The Trudeau government began distributing the rebate in 2020, initially as an annual refundable tax credit, after introducing a Canadawide carbon levy in 2019. Ottawa switched to administering the payment in tranches in 2022, but only sent out three payments, starting with a double instalment in July of that year.

“We moved from a tax credit to quarterly payments to return money to Canadians more often," Mr. Bourget said, adding that many Canadians received their spring instalment on April 14.

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But NDP MP Niki Ashton blamed “poor planning" for many other eligible recipients missing out on the mid-April issue of the rebate.

“Why has this government been so slow to implement automatic tax filings that would ensure Canadians aren't missing out on critical benefits and support?" Ms. Ashton, who is her party's critic for national revenue, said in a statement by e-mail.

Under the current payment scheme, the CRA is supposed to send out quarterly instalments on the 15th of April, July, October and January. When the 15th falls on a weekend or federal statutory holiday, the CRA issues the payment on the previous business day. This year, in which April 15 fell on Saturday, the spring payment was set to be issued on April 14.

A family of four residing in those four provinces can expect to receive an amount that ranges from $244 in Ontario up to $386 in Alberta from the spring instalment of the rebate. Annually, the rebate, which is tied to the size of the household, ranges from $976 in Ontario and $1,544 in Alberta, with taxpayers in rural and small communities entitled to an extra 10 per cent.

Canadians don't need to specifically apply for the climate rebate, for which the CRA determines eligibility based on their tax returns.

But several taxpayers took to social media to say they were unaware they had to submit their taxes early to receive the first quarterly payment by last Friday.

A list of 2023 tax deadlines published by the CRA on Feb. 21 doesn't mention March 24 but encourages Canadians and their eligible spouses or common-law partners to file their 2022 electronically by March 10 to receive the first tranche of the climate rebate by last Friday.

At least one other official page listing 2023 tax deadlines makes no mention of March 10 or March 24.

CO cnragy : Canada Revenue Agency

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PUB The Globe and Mail Inc.

AN Document GLOB000020230419ej4j0001b

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